United Nations ST/AI/2011/9

Secretariat

1 August 2011

Administrative instruction

Coordination of action in cases of death of staff members: travel and transportation in cases of death or health-related emergency

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2009/4, and for the purpose of implementing staff rules 7.1 (a) (v) and 7.2 (d) (v), hereby promulgates the following:

Section 1
Designation of a coordinating department or office in case of death of a staff member

General

1.1 Responsibility for coordinating the actions required when a staff member dies while in the service of the Organization shall rest with the following departments or offices:

(a) The Department of Field Support for staff in peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The Department may request the mission at which the staff member has died to assume coordinating authority for staff members locally recruited at that mission;

(b) The Office of Human Resources Management for staff members serving in New York or on travel status from New York, except for staff covered under section 1.1 (a) above;

(c) The human resources office responsible for the determination of separation entitlements of staff members serving at duty stations away from Headquarters.

1.2 In the event of an emergency, the Emergency Preparedness and Support Team in the Office of Human Resources Management will coordinate and complement the activities of the department and/or office designated under section 1.1 above by ensuring the provision of essential support to survivors and the families of those who perish or are injured as a result of a malicious act, natural disaster or other emergency situation, as described in General Assembly resolution 64/260.

Please recycle

Special circumstances

1.3 When the circumstances of a staff member's death or his or her position in the Organization is of such public interest as to involve the Secretariat as a whole, the Office of Human Resources Management may assume responsibility, either at its own initiative or at the request of the department or office normally responsible under section 1.1 above.

1.4 When a staff member dies as a result of malicious acts, under suspicious or unclear circumstances and/or in an accident, the senior United Nations official closest to the scene shall take charge and coordinate his or her action with the Department of Safety and Security. The Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security shall exercise overall authority until the investigation is concluded, at which point the coordinating department or office designated under section 1.1 shall assume responsibility, or, in the event of an emergency, the Emergency Preparedness and Support Team in accordance with section 1.2 above.

Section 2
Functions of the coordinating department or office

2.1 The coordinating department or office shall immediately:

(a) Notify the next of kin and the officials responsible for the administrative, medical or counselling actions required. Within the authority delegated to departments and offices, responsibility for taking such administrative actions is defined by the administrative instructions on personnel payroll clearance action (ST/AI/155/Rev.2 and Amend.1);

(b) Designate a staff member to act as focal point for the family ("the family focal point"). The family focal point shall contact, in the first instance, the person or persons noted by the deceased staff member as his or her emergency contact(s). The family focal point shall assist the family of the deceased staff member in any way possible and guide them through the process of applying for and obtaining all relevant entitlements.

2.2 The family focal point shall work closely with the Office of Human Resources Management and other offices involved. Those offices shall, as a matter of priority, keep the family focal point informed of all developments in order to enable the focal point to properly assist the family and generally provide the focal point with the fullest assistance in the discharge of his or her functions.

2.3 In the event of an emergency, the Emergency Preparedness and Support Team will provide immediate response to an incident, support the deployment of the United Nations medical emergency response team and rapid response administrative personnel teams, which will identify and keep track of victims, coordinate and prioritize needs, including medical evacuation and psychological support, work with local medical facilities to monitor the provision of medical and support services by those facilities and liaise with the third-party administrators for United Nation health insurance plans and with the United Nations office responsible for management of the health insurance plans covering the affected staff members.

Section 3
Travel in cases of death or health-related emergency

Medical evacuation

3.1 Travel on medical evacuation shall be authorized in accordance with the provisions of administrative instruction ST/AI/2000/10 of 21 September 2000 (or as amended).

Other travel

3.2 The discretionary authority of the Secretary-General to authorize travel of staff members and their eligible family members for compelling reasons under staff rules 7.1 (a) (v) and 7.2 (d) (v) may be exercised as follows:

Serious injury or illness of a staff member

(a) In case of serious injury or illness of a staff member not accompanied at the duty station or mission area by an eligible family member, the travel of such a family member to visit the staff member may be authorized, provided that the Medical Director certifies that the condition of the staff member requires the presence of the family member and that the family member's travel cannot be covered under other official travel. The standard of air travel accommodation to be provided to the eligible family member shall be economy class;

Death of a staff member

(b) In case of death of a staff member, the following provisions may apply:

(i) Travel of an eligible family member may be authorized to the duty station or mission area to attend the burial and/or to accompany the remains to the place to which the deceased was entitled to return travel. Travel under the provisions of this subsection is without prejudice to the normal entitlement of the eligible family member to return travel on the separation of the staff member;

(ii) Alternatively, and at the request of the family, travel of a staff member other than a family member may be authorized to accompany the remains to the place to which the deceased was entitled to return travel;

Death of a family member

(c) In case of death of an eligible family member at the duty station or in the mission area, round trip travel for the staff member to accompany the remains to the place to which the deceased was entitled to return travel may be authorized;

(d) When the remains are transported to a place other than the place of entitlement to return travel, the expenses to be borne by the Organization for travel to accompany the remains under sections 3.2 (b) or (c) above shall not exceed the amount which would have been payable for travel to the place of entitlement to return travel.

Section 4
Transportation of decedents

Death of a staff member

4.1 Upon the death of a staff member for whom there is an entitlement to return transportation under staff rule 7.18, the family may request payment of the expenses of transportation of the body as follows:

Transportation by the Organization

(a) For an internationally recruited staff member, transportation may be authorized from the official duty station or the place of death to the place of recruitment, or the place of home leave, where authorized under staff rule 7.1 (b);

(b) For locally recruited staff members on travel status, from the place of death to the parent duty station;

(c) If the family wishes to transport the body to any other place, the expenses to be borne by the Organization shall not exceed the amount which would have been payable to the place of entitlement to return travel. The expenses for transportation of the remains shall include reasonable costs for preparation of the body;

Lump-sum option

(d) For internationally recruited staff described in section 4.1 (a) above, the beneficiaries of the deceased staff member may opt for a lump-sum payment in lieu of the Organization's assistance in managing the transportation and other activities and expenses pertaining to the handling of the remains of the staff member. The lump-sum is a one-time payment of the amount specified in section 4.1 (e) and serves to cover any and all transportation costs of the remains of the staff member to the place to which he or she was entitled to return travel in accordance with section 4.1 (a) above, any and all expenses including, but not limited to, preparation and transportation of the body, travel of a family member as described in section 3.2 (b) above and any and all other reasonable and admissible expenses, in line with the provisions set out in the handbook for action in cases of death in service.[1] The lump-sum payment will be the total amount of financial assistance provided by the Organization for such expenses. No other payments will be provided by the Organization for such expenses, including under compensation schemes for service-incurred death, as applicable;

(e) The global rate for the lump-sum option will be $10,000. The rate will be reviewed periodically and, if necessary, adjusted when appropriate;

(f) Once the family has been advised of the amount of the lump-sum option, the deceased staff member's beneficiaries as defined under staff rule 1.6, or a legal guardian in the case where the beneficiaries are minors, shall have five (5) working days to notify the executive, administrative or local human resources office of their agreement to accept the lump sum. If notice to elect the lump sum is not received within the five (5) working days, the United Nations will assume the responsibility of preparation and transportation of the body. However, should the lump-sum option

[1] http://un-epst.org/epst-news/death-in-service-handbook.

be accepted, any costs incurred by the Organization resulting from miscellaneous expenses, including, but not limited to, preparation and storage of the body, will be offset from the lump-sum payment;

(g) The lump-sum option shall not be available on a partial basis;

(h) Once the lump-sum option has been selected, it shall not be possible to reverse the decision and request the Organization to assist in managing the transportation or other activities and expenses pertaining to the handling of the remains of the staff member;

(i) The Organization shall not be responsible for delays or additional expenses that may be incurred or liabilities that may arise as a result of the exercise of the lump-sum option.

Local interment

4.2 Alternatively, the family may request the Organization to pay the reasonable costs for local interment.

Death of spouse or dependent child

4.3 Upon the death of a spouse or dependent child previously authorized to travel to the duty station under staff rule 7.2 the staff member may request the Organization to pay the expenses of transportation of the remains or the expenses of local interment. Pursuant to section 4.1 (d) through (i), the staff member may also opt for a lump-sum payment in lieu of the Organization's assistance in managing the transportation or other activities and expenses pertaining to the handling of the remains.

4.4 The reasonable costs that may be reimbursed for preparation of the body of the deceased in New York prior to transportation or for local interment in New York shall be determined by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management. At other duty stations, reasonable costs shall be determined by the Chief of Administration or the corresponding official.

Section 5
Final provisions

5.1 The present administrative instruction shall enter into force on the date of its issuance.

5.2 Administrative instruction ST/AI/2000/14 of 9 November 2000, is hereby abolished with effect from 31 July 2011.

(*Signed*) Angela **Kane**
Under-Secretary-General for Management